

How to Develop Positive Thinking Habits

Category	Definition	Negative Example	Positive Alternative
All or Nothing, “Black or White” Thinking	Seeing a situation as all one way or all another way. There is no in between.	“I can’t work anymore, so nothing I do is any good.”	“I can still work part time” “I am able to volunteer at church”
Fortune Telling	Judging your future in a negative way. You do not think about the good things that could happen.	“Oh man, here comes a migraine headache. I know I will have to go get a shot in the ER for sure!”	“I feel a migraine coming on, but I learned some strategies that might help me avoid it. Trying them gives me some control.”
Not Accepting the Positive	Telling yourself that positive situations do not really count. You just got lucky.	“I cooked dinner last night, but that is not really good because before that I had not been able to cook dinner for a month.”	“I was able to cook dinner for the first time in a month. That really made me feel good about myself!”
Emotional Reasoning	Feeling something or believing something in a very strong way means that it must be true.	“I can feel my bones grinding together when I move. I don’t care what the PT says, it is not good for me to exercise.”	“Even though I am scared of exercising, the PT and doctor both say it is safe and good for me. I trust them.”
Labeling	Putting a negative name on everyone in a group.	“All doctors are jerks! They don’t care.”	“This doctor was not very nice to me. But I do have some very good doctors.”
Magnifying or Minimizing	Making the negative seem much worse than it really is. Making the positive seem not as important as it really is.	“My pain is unbearable! I can’t live with it!” “I worked in the garden yesterday and today I feel horrible!”	“The pain is bad, today, but I have dealt with worse. I can handle it.” “I worked in the garden 2 hours yesterday. I am a bit sore, but it felt great to be out.”
Mental Filter	Paying too much attention to one negative detail instead of seeing the whole picture.	“My fibromyalgia/EDS means that I am not a whole person. I am damaged goods.”	“My pain does not define who I am. I still have a lot to offer my family and friends.” “There are a lot of things I can still do.”
Mind Reading	Believing that you know what other people are thinking.	“My husband thinks that I make my pain seem worse than it really is.”	“I am not going to worry about what other people think.”
Overgeneralizing	Because one particular situation is bad, you make it seem like other similar situations will be just as bad.	“I can’t do the work I was trained for anymore, so I won’t be able to go back to work at all.”	“I can’t do my previous job, but I might be able to do an office job that did not require much walking or lifting.”
Should Statements	Ideas about how the world should be, ought to be or must be, and you hang onto these ideas.	“A good doctor should figure out what’s wrong with me and fix it!” “There must be a drug that helps”	“Things are what they are. I will make the best of what I can do.”
Personalizing	When you see yourself as the cause of a negative event, but you really had no control over it.	“This pain is a punishment from God for something I did wrong.”	“Life is sometimes really unfair. But there are other people who have to deal with even worse things, so it isn’t just me.”

Positive Thinking Worksheet

Category	My Current Negative Thinking	Positive Thinking Alternative
All or Nothing, "Black or White" Thinking		
Fortune Telling		
Not Accepting the Positive		
Emotional Reasoning		
Labeling		
Magnifying or Minimizing		
Mental Filter		
Mind Reading		
Overgeneralizing		
Should Statements		
Personalizing		